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April 1983, Number 79

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*The Delius Society  
Journal*

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April 1983, Number 79

The Delius Society

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## Acknowledgements

The cover illustration is an early sketch of Delius by Edvard Munch reproduced by kind permission of the Curator of the Munch Museum, Oslo.

The quotation from *In a Summer Garden* on page 7 is in the arrangement by Philip Heseltine included in the volume of four piano transcriptions reviewed in this issue and appears with acknowledgement to Thames Publishing and the Delius Trust.

The previously unpublished photograph of Frederick and Jelka Delius was kindly supplied by Lionel Hill to whom the Editor is extremely grateful.

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## EDITORIAL

Just as our thoughts are being directed towards the 50th anniversaries next year of the deaths of Elgar, Holst, O'Neill and Delius, we heard during February and March within the space of a fortnight of the deaths of Sir Adrian Boult, Herbert Howells and Sir William Walton, news that for future generations will surely mark this year in a similar fashion to that fateful one almost half a century ago. To that list must now be added the name of the composer Elisabeth Lutyens (whose husband Edward Clark conducted the first broadcast performances of *In a Summer Garden*, *North Country Sketches* and the *Legende*). Both Howells and Walton of course have scarcely anything in common with Delius (though they have a curious correspondence with each other in the slow movements of their respective Piano Quartets). One does not even readily associate Boult's name with Delius whose music indeed he rarely conducted in his later years. Yet while he was in charge of the Birmingham and BBC orchestras and at the RCM his repertoire included all four concertos (with the first performances of the Violin and the Tertis arrangement of the Double) as well as *Appalachia*, *The Song of the High Hills*, *Paris* and *North Country Sketches*. Among the smaller works, he premièred the *Fantastic Dance*. If by temperament more in sympathy with Vaughan Williams than Delius, he will be widely remembered as the supreme spokesman for English music, and the passing of these revered musicians will be mourned by all whose heart is in English music.

Many members have expressed a wish for 1984 to be commemorated in 'composer' stamps and we are grateful to Mike Duckenfield from Blackheath and Ron Kirkman from Geneva for their continued efforts in arousing the interests of the Post Office. The official reply is: 'Music has been chosen as the subject for special stamps by all member administrations of the Conference Européenne des Postes et des Telecommunications in 1985, which has been designated European Music Year. We are therefore proposing to produce a set of stamps on Music in 1985. . There is a strong possibility that Elgar, Delius and Holst will be commemorated in this issue so that the opportunity of celebrating these composers will not be lost.' Lest we should feel down-hearted, we can console ourselves with the thought that next year we shall be licking the reverse of designs depicting such eminently worthy subjects as farm animals, heraldry, urban renewal, the 25th anniversary of direct elections to the European Parliament, the Greenwich Meridian, mail transport, the British Council and Christmas. What it is to have a keen sense of priorities!

Evelyn Harris writes from Florida that once again the Annual Delius Festival at Jacksonville has been a great success (the programme was briefly detailed in the last Journal). 'Having Eric Fenby is always an outstanding event and having John Canarina, who had made so many friends during the years he was conductor of the Jacksonville Symphony here, proved to be a tremendous drawing card. . We couldn't have been more pleased with the closing event when Eric conducted the Delius works. Quite a good orchestra and chorus had been prepared for him, and the *Songs of Farewell* went very well.' To the Delius Association of Florida we send our best wishes for their continued success.

Margaret Neely, known affectionately as Peggy to the members of the Philadelphia Branch of the Delius Society for which she acted as secretary, died on December 5th. In her memory two most fitting concerts were held, the first at All Saints Episcopal Church on December 10th consisting chiefly of choral extracts from oratorio sung to an organ accompaniment, and the other on January 30th also in Philadelphia when Davyd Booth was accompanied by George Reeves in a programme which included the early B major Sonata for Violin and the *Legende*. May we take this opportunity to inform members of the Memorial Plaque Appeal in the name of our late member Robert Aickman who made a generous bequest to the Society. The Robert Aickman New Lock has recently been completed on a stretch of the Upper Avon, a waterway in which he took a particular interest. A bronze portrait plaque has been commissioned to be set in a monument under the trees between the lock and the river. Donations from any friends and acquaintances who wish to be associated with this memorial will be gratefully received by Miss Pearson, R.F.A. Monument Account, 44 Holland Street, London W8 4LX.

*The Times* of March 18th carried an article in its 'Medical Briefing' column which casts doubt as to whether Delius's terminal illness was, as has been generally accepted, due to syphilis. Quoting from the article by kind permission of the Editor, it continues: 'In the 1880s Delius had caught syphilis and was immediately treated with arsenic. Later, when he went blind with optic neuritis and became almost totally paralysed, barely able to move one arm, it was assumed that this was a late neurological manifestation of his earlier troubles. When in 1948 Professor J.F. Soothill was shown Delius's case notes by his physician, Sir John Coneybeare, he was struck by the fact that Sir John had found no evidence of damage to the posterior column of the spinal cord, characteristic of tabes, one form of neurosyphilis; nor was there any evidence of impairment in intellect, characteristic of the other form of syphilis damage to the nervous system, general paralysis of the insane. The blood test for syphilis used at that time, the WR, was negative. This particular test has now been replaced by more sensitive ones. Even so, Professor Soothill would have expected the WR to have remained positive in a case of general paralysis of the insane. He agrees it could well be negative in an old case of tabes, but if that had been the diagnosis he has every confidence that the renowned Sir John Coneybeare would not have missed signs of posterior column damage. Sir John made no secret of the fact that he did not know the cause of Delius's final illness, but he was certain that it was not syphilis.' [© Times Newspapers Ltd.]

An attempt in Oxford around the beginning of last December to stage *Hassan* turned out an utter travesty. The publicity leaflet which stated that 'much of Delius's original score will be incorporated' might just as well have boasted with equal truth that live camels and elephants would be seen on the Golden Road. The only mention of Delius in the programme book was an acknowledgement to the Delius Trust (along with Boosey & Hawkes) and the text was at times so gabbled that one member of the audience new to the play thought that Selim was speaking in Arabic. The production was aptly summed up by Cathy and Alice Jones from Stratford-upon-Avon who wrote: 'Words fail us regarding the *Hassan* at Oxford. It was a complete catastrophe and we hope that *no-one* of

the Delius Society went. We are subscribers to advance booking at Oxford and it was with excitement that we read about *Hassan* with "Delius live music and eastern music also". The production was, as we found out to our cost, by undergraduates. The only piece of Delius — the Serenade played ad nauseam on flute and out-of-tune piano! The acting was abysmal — the audience was laughing or bored by turns — the staging awful and accidents happened like the scenery moving to expose backstage activities. While one would like to applaud a brave attempt to stage a difficult play, this effort fell far below the excellent standard one finds in many amateur productions.

Praiseworthy indeed was the performance of the closing scene from *Irmelin* (beginning a bar before figure 850) given by Opera Viva under the indefatigable Leslie Head as part of a concert survey of British Opera from 1876 to 1914 at St John's Smith Square, London on February 12th. One moment of insecure ensemble apart when the soloists too impetuously were ahead, this was a passionate and finely controlled reading of considerable insight, with the closing bars in particular being beautifully held together. The excerpt certainly whetted the appetite for what now remains the one major Delius work due for revival and recording. Not only does the final love duet both in words and music foreshadow its counterpart in *A Village Romeo* but how familiar that little figure after 960 seems when it was much later to be used so effectively in *In a Summer Garden*.

There will soon be a chance to hear an even rarer Delius work for this May Ralph Holmes is to make a studio recording of the hitherto unperformed Suite for Violin and Orchestra (1888) with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Vernon Handley. The date of broadcast has not yet been announced. Its first public performance will be on March 24th 1984 at St John's Smith Square, this time with the Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra under James Blair. During this summer Ralph Holmes is also to perform the Delius Violin Concerto in Stockholm with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Vernon Handley.

Two historical 78 recordings have recently been transferred to cassette. Lionel Tertis playing his arrangement for viola of the Second Violin Sonata and Beatrice Harrison playing the Cello Sonata are paired on Claremont 78-50-04T from Graham Sound & Electronics, PO Box 179, Claremont 7735, South Africa. This and other such historical cassettes, non-Dolby and unfiltered transfers, have been distributed by Caruso & Co of 62 New Oxford Street, London (01-580-6155) at £3.49. EMI have announced the release on their HMV mid-price 'Portrait of the Artist' cassette series of several of Sir Charles Groves's recordings: *Paris*, *Sea Drift*, *A song of Summer*, *Dance Rhapsody No. 1*, *Eventyr* and *Cynara*, all on a single cassette TCC2-POR54295 of over 90 minutes' duration. As a reminder, 'The Fenby Legacy' set is available on real time duplicated cassettes DKPC 9008/9 at £11.35.

Greatly welcome news is that Dr Fenby has recently recorded for Unicorn *The Song of the High Hills* with the Ambrosian Singers and the RPO. (The projected complement, songs with orchestra in the Delius orchestrations, will be recorded in December.) At these sessions the *Intermezzo* from *Fennimore and Gerda* was also taken. On Unicorn DKP 9021 Dr Fenby accompanies Julian

Lloyd Webber in the Cello Sonata and also gives an introductory talk, and Eric Parkin plays the Three Preludes and the polka *Zum Carnival*. In the late summer a record of Delius songs with piano will be released, Dr Fenby accompanying Felicity Lott, Sarah Walker and Anthony Rolfe Johnson. As regards two eagerly awaited publications, John Boulton Smith's *Delius and Munch* is anticipated in May/June while Lionel Carley's *Delius: A Life in Letters* will not now be published until October.

As a closing thought, our Society this year comes of age, having been founded in the Delius Centenary year 1962. In timely accordance with this rejoicing 'Delius' has this season been both a favourite and three times winner, albeit on the turf if not in the concert hall. Perhaps his equine namesake has heeded that exhortation of 1888: *Plus vite mon cheval!*

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## MUSIC REVIEW

### BRITISH HERITAGE SERIES 1 : FREDERICK DELIUS

Thames Publishing have recently commenced a new series entitled British Heritage Series with four of Delius's works transcribed for solo piano. The pieces are *A Song before Sunrise* arranged by Eric Fenby, *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* arranged by Philip Heseltine, *In a Summer Garden* arranged by Philip Heseltine, and *Late Swallows* arranged by Eric Fenby.

As Robert Threlfall states in his preface, study of Delius's harmony is facilitated by examining it 'divorced from the subtleties of the instrumental colour with which it was originally clothed'. It is also fascinating to see how two musicians with such an intimate knowledge of Delius's music arrange the music for the piano and in particular to observe how they select from the often very rich texture the parts they consider to be important. For instance, in *A Song before Sunrise* Eric Fenby includes the violin figure which accompanies the theme on the violas and cellos (five bars after letter B). This produces technical difficulties for a pianist of limited ability, but undoubtedly (properly played) makes a richer effect than if the figure had been omitted.

A comparison of Heseltine's *Cuckoo* with that of Gerard Bunk (OUP) reveals Heseltine to be more selective and having a better ear for what is important. Bunk is often thick and cluttered and for some reason makes the first and last chords a spread chord and an arpeggio respectively. As to *In a Summer Garden*, many members will remember Alan Rowlands playing his own version of this piece at a Society meeting. I was surprised then how well the piece sounded on the piano, and Heseltine's version is also most effective. *Late Swallows* is beautifully arranged, although it must be said that the leaps in the 'swallow' figuration are difficult to perform satisfactorily on the piano unless one is a Robert Threlfall!

This is a most enterprising volume and I urge all pianist members to acquire a copy.

R.B.K.



# JELKA DELIUS

A recollection by Dr. Eric Fenby



*All are my blooms and all sweet blooms of love  
To thee I gave while spring and summer sang.*

On September 21 1982 Dr Fenby gave an informal and unscripted talk on Jelka Delius to the Delius Society at Mary Ward House, London. He is of course uniquely placed to speak authoritatively on the subject and with his kind permission what follows is an edited transcript of this memorable talk for the special benefit of those many members who were unable to be present.

I first met Jelka on the station at Bourron in October 1928. Had I known it, she was the first wall of defence against intruders into Delius's privacy. In reality I too was an intruder until such time as perhaps I might be able to prove myself. But I had consoled myself initially that if the Deliuses found things about me they didn't like, they would do their best to ignore them if they found I was useful musically.

I have never regarded as particularly accurate Ken Russell's image of Jelka through the acting of Maureen Pryor in the TV film *Song of Summer*. The impression it made, it seemed to me, was of a slight dottiness, whereas Jelka was an extremely assured person. The only time I remember her caught off balance was in the year after Delius's death. We had gone to a recital given in London by Albert Sammons and Evelyn Howard-Jones in which they played the Third Sonata. At the end I was chatting to Jelka when Margot Asquith butted in — 'Jelka Delius! Aren't you sorry you never had a baby by Fred?'

Jelka had a soft, pleasing voice, often amusingly modulated. She loved to play on her foreign inflections of speech when pronouncing English where nine out of ten adverbs were in French! In the day to day company of the Deliuses, if one didn't know French, all one would get was the drift of conversation. This marked preference for French adverbs was shared by their American neighbours, Alden and Hilma Brooks. Yet I cannot recall the Deliuses speaking together entirely in French; nor would Delius have anything read aloud to him in French. They both spoke Norwegian when they wanted secrecy, and were mildly confounded when Percy Grainger came because he understood it.

On arrival at Grez I saw how well Jelka managed her household. The house itself was very uncomfortable, especially in winter. There was no heating except in the living room and music room, and nothing at all in the bedrooms. The household at that time consisted of Delius and Jelka, the Saxon housemaid who lived in, and her own brother who acted as male-nurse. There was also the cook whose home was in the village, a part-time gardener, and a seamstress and chauffeur who were on call.

My impression of Jelka was of a shrewd, intelligent woman. She could be obdurate in a very German way, and was always looking for flaws in everything, in people's characters as well. But she was firm and steadfast. At times, rather too difficult; at others, particularly with strangers, rather gushing, much to Delius's distaste. But she was uncomplaining with her lot except when driven beyond belief. When I think of what Jelka had to do for Delius, that he never seemed to have the slightest idea of all the constraints put upon her, both emotionally and physically, I am amazed the longer I live. How a man who wrote such sensitive music could be so completely unaware of his hard feelings on occasions I couldn't imagine. It wasn't forgetfulness at all, but his Nietzschean attitude to life even in respect of his closest ones.

Jelka kept a remarkable table. During the week there were home-made soups, a variety of fish and poultry dishes, delicious pâtés, salads, soufflés, and simple but exquisite sweets. On Sundays we always had bouillon soup – I've never tasted better – and invariably brioche and fruit-flan for tea.

Jelka was a punctilious letter writer and answered all correspondence by return. The afternoons whilst Delius slept were given to writing her 'thunder-letters' about the neglect of her husband's music. After tea, should Delius feel unable to work, we would take a walk round the village when she would share her confidences.

She often talked of her unsettled life as the daughter of a German diplomat, moving from one German Embassy to another. Here in the elegant soirées of the day she heard an amount of lieder and the Grieg songs then in vogue, and in her tiny, pathetic voice she would often recall snatches of her favourites whilst going about the house. She knew very little about symphonic music but she was proud of her family connection with Moscheles, the pianist and friend of Mendelssohn. Delius himself was less respectful and apparently sat on a huge volume of the works of Moscheles when composing at the piano. It was still there in my day on the chair at the piano!

'The first time I met Fred was at a party in a girl-friend's studio in Paris,' Jelka told me. 'I had the temerity to sing a Grieg song when somebody said that this young man was a friend of Grieg's. It was received in stony silence! I thought that was the end. I would never see him again, and I'd really taken quite a fancy to him. You can judge my surprise when he came to my studio the next day and played his own setting of the same words which he thought was better than Grieg's! What really brought us together was – in a sense – not music, but because Fred was reading Nietzsche at the time, and so was I. That was our great bond to begin with. I saw him occasionally afterwards, but I was no match against his other women!



Frederick and Jelka Delius in Norway, 1922 or 1923  
[by courtesy of Lionel Hill]

Their next significant meeting was at Grez. Delius had visited Keary at Bourron for advice on the libretto of his opera *Koanga*. Hearing that Jelka was painting at Grez and living at the Poule d'Eau they decided to walk over the fields to see her. Delius had rowed her up the river to land on a derelict garden in which the owner, a crazy Count, had allowed Jelka to paint in his absence. Walking towards the shuttered house Delius had observed with obvious delight, 'Oh! I could work here!' But soon he was off to catch the train to join his boon companions in Paris. As for Jelka she was already pondering how she might buy the property herself! A national scandal gave her the chance. The Count was in difficulties; the house was put up for sale and Jelka's mother bought it cash down for a very small figure. She insisted on two conditions; that Jelka's German student friend, Ida Gerhardi, also a painter, should share the house with Jelka at Grez, and that Marie, a trusted Breton peasant, should look after their creaturely comforts there.

The story has it that Jelka was sure Delius would turn up again, but her hopes were dashed when a post-card came saying he was sailing to Florida! That was the last she thought she would hear of him. But a second post-card some months later told her that he was back in Paris and coming down to Grez for the weekend! Surely the longest weekend in music, for he stayed for the rest of his life. His Florida trip had been a fiasco and he had very little money. Thus Jelka provided the means of establishing him in his work. 'It was wonderful in the early days when the three of us were here,' she recalled. 'Ida and I painting in the garden; we could hear Fred upstairs at the piano in the extraordinary way he would improvise before starting to compose; first in chords which he found by instinct; and then he would decorate them with arabesques and so on!' This man, she felt, had more than talent and, come what may, she would do all she could to help him develop it.

Ida, initially, was the greater help for she knew people like Dr Hans Haym, the civic conductor of Elberfeld, for thus through her contact with him Delius's music was made known in Germany. It is not to be wondered that the inevitable emotional triangle ensued between Fritz (as he was still called), Jelka and Ida. In the end Jelka won him and Ida retired from the scene.

It is often said that it was a pity that Jelka sacrificed her painting to Delius, but in my opinion she had done her best work long before Delius's invalid years. Nor do I think she was as gifted as Ida. Ida's painting had great character and an inner possibility of development which Jelka's work lacked. Jelka's best paintings were almost entirely of scenes from Norway — gorgeous sunsets over mountains. The colourings were bold, contrasting with her Monet-like style in hazy portrayals of lovely young blondes. She had also modelled a fine head of Delius, then in full vigour, cast in plaster. How Jelka must have struggled to take down Delius's music [before my time] in 1922! He had lost the use of his hands but fortunately he could still see to correct his material, as in the Second Violin sonata. Here she had to write down an original accompaniment to the violin completely beyond her playing powers, and this when she said she was utterly terrified of making the slightest mistake! Her greatest contribution of Delius's music was in finding him suitable texts to set. These she would write out and put on his desk, leave them there and hope for the best. She steered him in this



Jelka Delius (centre) at Grez with Ella and Percy Grainger in 1929

remarkable way till he found his own tone and rhythm in sound. That a woman of scant musical knowledge, who played the piano but at a snail's pace and read music even slower, could listen to Delius improvising and divine in those sounds certain feelings and emotions she could afterwards seek out aptly in words — this to me was her ultimate achievement. We owe to her *Sea Drift*, *Songs of Sunset*, *An Arabesque*, many texts for Delius's songs, suggestions for *A Mass of Life*, and finally *Songs of Farewell*, the words of which she had copied out nine years before its composition.

Her support to me was vital when you think of it. There I was, completely unknown, having to be taken on trust and immediately given an entrée to Delius's music room; before long even entrée to his manuscripts when he discovered I could play from full score when he wished to hear an unpublished manuscript. Jelka, by some uncanny insight, made it clear from the beginning that she believed in me. She didn't expect immediate results. She used to say, 'Now, Fred is the most difficult man you could ever have. You've met a very extraordinary musician . . .' To the very last she always took my side, often against him when things were dark — because she knew that what we had to do was the most important meaning to his life — his music. Nothing mattered so much initially after my arrival at Grez as his making a start after six years of inaction. I shall never forget her coming to me one day in the music room with tears in her eyes: 'Oh! you don't know what it means to me now Fred has told me this morning — "Don't read to me; I'm thinking about my music!" And that was wonderful. I thought I'd never hear that again.'

That was the woman Delius married. How fortunate it was for us that he married her and not one of the many women who dangled around him in his early days in Paris.



## THE FENBY LECTURE

It is with much pleasure we hear that, as a result of the great success of John Canarina's lecture at this year's Delius Festival at Jacksonville, the Delius Association of Florida has seen fit to honour our President by instituting an annual address to be known as 'The Fenby Lecture'.

# BEECHAM: THE DELIUS REPERTOIRE

## Part Three

by Stephen Lloyd

This article concludes the detailed examination of Beecham's Delius repertoire begun in Journal 71 (April 1981) and continued in Journal 75 (April 1982). As before the dates of composition and first performance (when not conducted by Beecham) are given after each work except in the case of those songs that exist in versions with either piano or orchestral accompaniment, for in such cases the precise dating of the orchestral version has generally proved difficult. At the 1929 Delius Festival, with the notable exceptions of *A Late Lark* and *Cynara*, the songs presented were sung with piano, the accompanist being Evelyn Howard-Jones. At the 1946 Festival orchestral songs only were given, with one group being conducted by Richard Austin.

## VII WORKS FOR SOLO INSTRUMENT(S) AND ORCHESTRA

### VII/3 LEGENDE for Violin and Orchestra (1892/5: London 1896/9)

Performances of this work have been extremely rare occasions: this is one of the least performed Delius scores and surely due for revival. Since the 1899 Delius concert in St James's Hall and a 1924 broadcast conducted by Edward Clark, the two Beecham performances listed here have been the only ones traced.

1916 January 29	Arthur Catterall/Hallé	Manchester
March 16	Catterall/Hallé	Manchester

### VII/4 PIANO CONCERTO (1897: Elberfeld 24.10.04, later revised)

Despite the much lower critical opinion in which this concerto is now generally held, Beecham's performances of it have been more numerous than of all the other Delius concertos put together. This may partly be explained by the work's more 'popular' appeal and its once much higher critical standing, but also by the presence in Beecham's later years of his 'beloved companion, brave and beautiful, gracious and gay, to whom the music of Delius was ever a joy and a mystery', to cite the dedication of his biography of Delius. In the early 1950s Betty Humby Beecham's concert career was abbreviated by illness. She died in Buenos Aires in 1958.

1910 October 30	Vernon Warner/BSO Covent Garden
1911 December 6	Arthur Cooke/Birmingham Phil Soc
December 17	Cooke/BSO London Palladium
1914 April 16	Percy Grainger/Torquay Municipal O
1915 February 8	Benno Moiseiwitsch/LSO QH
March 18	R J Forbes/Hallé Manchester

	April 2	Moiseiwitsch/LSO London Palladium
	May 13	Evlyn Howard-Jones/LSO QH
	May 31	Howard-Jones/NSO RAH
1917	January 24	William Murdoch/Hallé Birmingham
	October 1	Murdoch/Hallé Manchester
1929	October 18	Howard-Jones/BBCO QH b/cast Delius Festival
1934	February 20	Katherine Goodson/Liverpool PO b/cast
	March 25	Goodson/LPO QH
	December 6	Forbes/Hallé Manchester
1935	March 10	Goodson/LPO QH
	March 25	Goodson/Bournemouth Municipal O
1937	November 28	Edward Kilenyi/LPO Covent Garden
1939	March 16	Forbes/Hallé Manchester
1940	August 31	Eunice Gardiner/Adelaide SO
1941	June 22	Betty Humby/Columbia SO WABC b/cast
	November 17	Randolph Hokanson/Seattle SO
	December 5	Humby/Philadelphia O
	December 6	Humby/Philadelphia O
1945	March 21	Humby Beecham (m. 23.2.43)/Rochester PO
	May 12	Humby Beecham/Peoples SO San Francisco
	June 24	Humby Beecham/LPO RAH
	June 28	Humby Beecham/Liverpool PO
	(Recording 1945 Oct 3, Dec 27 Humby Beecham/LPO unpublished)	
1946	March 15	Humby Beecham/Havana PO
	October 16	Humby Beecham/RPO Oxford
	(Recording 1946 Oct 30, Dec 4 & 16 Humby Beecham/RPO)	
	November 4	Humby Beecham/RPO RAH Delius Festival
1947	June 9	Humby Beecham/RPO Harringay
1948	August 17	Humby Beecham/Cape Town O
	August 29	Humby Beecham/Johannesburg O
	September 6	Humby Beecham/Durban O
	December 8	Humby Beecham/RPO Wolverhampton
1949	January 2	Humby Beecham/RPO E & Castle, London
	June 24	Humby Beecham/RPO b/cast
1950	November 25	Humby Beecham/RPO Chicago
	November 29	Humby Beecham/RPO Urbana, Illinois
	December 1	Humby Beecham/RPO Lafayette, Indiana

## VII/5 DOUBLE CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND CELLO (1915: London 21.2.20)

Of the war-time works conceived for solo string instruments, Beecham regarded the Violin Concerto as the 'only completely successful effort' and the Double Concerto as 'much the least successful'. While acknowledging the presence in the latter of 'much material that is both beautiful and original' he suggested that 'it might be saved from oblivion on the condition that two gifted soloists took it in hand and subjected it to fairly ruthless revision'. He had announced the work for an LSO concert in March 1921 but ultimately Coates replaced an indisposed Beecham (see Journal 63 p.12) and changed the programme. When he eventually gave the work in 1929, *The Musical Times* critic wrote that it had 'probably never had so sympathetic a performance'. Perhaps it was of that period that Humphrey Procter-Gregg remembered:



One day Beecham remarked dreamily, "I'm thinking of giving the Delius double concerto – interesting piece, you know – never been given here . . ." "But it has been," I said, and gave the place and personnel of the performance. He realised at once he was mistaken, but at any rate I had to be crushed. "*That!*" he cried in mock horror at my ignorance, "*that*, my dear fellow, was not a performance; that was something of an *international scandal*." One could only laugh and give in. [*Sir Thomas Beecham: conductor and impresario. p.131*]

This work was not put in the 1929 Delius Festival, and at the 1946 Festival it was conducted by Richard Austin. Other conductors to tackle the work during the twenties and the thirties include Wood (who also conducted the première), Boult, Heward and Grace Burrows who performed it with the British Women's Symphony Orchestra.

1929 June 14	May & Beatrice Harrison/LSO QH
1935 March 10	Paul Beard, Anthony Pini/LPO QH

## VII/6 VIOLIN CONCERTO (1916: London 30.1.19)

The performances traced are relatively few in number. At the time of his death Beecham was reported to be preparing for a new recording of the work. Sadly that was not to be.

1919 November 19	Albert Sammons/Liverpool Phil O
1929 October 24	Sammons/RPS QH Delius Festival
(Recording 1946 October 31, November 1 Jean Pougnet/RPO)	
1946 November 8	Jean Pougnet/RPO RAH Delius Festival
1947 April 17	Pougnet/RPO b/cast
June 26 *	Pougnet/BBC Northern O b/cast
1948 July 10	Pougnet/BBC Northern O b/cast
1950 December 3	David McCallum/RPO Michigan
December 7	McCallum/RPO Pittsburgh
December 8	McCallum/RPO Buffalo
December 9	McCallum/RPO Syracuse
1951 May 24	McCallum/RPO Bath
June 2	McCallum/RPO Croydon
August 2	McCallum/RPO Liverpool
1953 June 6	McCallum/RPO RFH

\*An hour's Delius programme was broadcast to listeners in the North of England. Not having access to northern editions of *Radio Times*, the remainder of the concert has not been determined.

## VII/7 CELLO CONCERTO (1921: Vienna 31.1.23)

In his Delius biography Beecham is remarkably reticent over the merits of this work which he seems never to have conducted, nor did he programme it in either of his Delius Festivals.

## VII/8 CAPRICE AND ELEGY (1930: USA 1930)

This work was not included in the 1946 Festival. No Beecham performance has been traced.

## WORKS FOR SOLO VOICE AND ORCHESTRA OR PIANO

### III/4 SEVEN DANISH SONGS

1. Silken Shoes 2. Irmelin [Rose] 3. Summer Nights 4. [In] The Seraglio Garden
5. Wine Roses 6. Red Roses 7. Let Springtime come, then

As part of a Festival of British Music in 1915 the fourth song of this set was sung by Agnes Nicholls at a concert on May 13 at which Beecham conducted the Delius Piano Concerto, but it has not been established whether she sang with orchestra or piano, or, if the latter, who her accompanist was. It is possible that Margaret Balfour sang two Delius songs at the Leeds Festival on October 3 1928 and while the songs have not been identified *In the Seraglio Garden* is one likely candidate. At the 1946 Festival that song was conducted by Richard Austin.

- |   |                  |  |
|---|------------------|--|
| 4 | 1914 July 8      | Agnes Nicholls/BSO Duke's Hall RAM<br>(2 Recording 1929 June 24 Dora Labbette, Beecham (pno.)) |
| 2 | 1946 November 21 | John Kentish/RPO Central Hall Westminster Delius Festival                                      |

### III/5 CYNARA (1907, 1929)

The two 1953 concerts listed below included Bruckner's Seventh Symphony and according to Cardus, in *Sir Thomas Beecham: a memoir* pp.30-1, the second performance was not conducted by Sir Thomas but by the leader of the orchestra which he erroneously states to be the BBC Symphony. It has not been possible to ascertain whether Beecham in fact conducted the second performance of *Cynara*.

- |      |             |   |
|------|-------------|---|
| 1929 | October 18  | John Goss/BBCO QH b/cast Delius Festival fp           |
| 1934 | November 8  | William Parsons RPS QH b/cast Delius Memorial Concert |
| 1946 | November 18 | Roderick Jones/RPO Westminster Delius Festival        |
| 1953 | December 21 | Bruce Boyce/RPO b/cast                                |
|      | December 22 | Boyce/RPO b/cast                                      |

### III/6 A LATE LARK (1924, 1929)

- |      |             |  |
|------|-------------|--|
| 1929 | October 12  | Heddle Nash/Columbia Gram. Co. O QH Delius Festival fp |
| 1946 | November 21 | John Kentish/RPO Westminster Delius Festival           |

## V/5 5 LIEDER (from the Norwegian) (1888)

1. Slumber Song 2. The Nightingale 3. Summer Eve 4. Longing 5. Sunset

(2 Recording 1929 June 24 Labbette, Beecham (pno.))

- 2 1929 December 3 Labbette, Beecham (pno.) Liverpool PS

## V/9 7 LIEDER (from the Norwegian)

1. Cradle Song 2. The Homeward Journey 3. Evening Voices [Twilight Fancies]
4. Sweet Venevil 5. Minstrel 6. Love Concealed 7. The Bird's Story

The second song was orchestrated by Robert Sondheim and at the 1946 Festival it was conducted by Richard Austin. The orchestration of *Twilight Fancies* used in 1946 and 1951 was Beecham's own.

- 1, 7 1929 February 8 Labbette/Wireless O Kingsway Hall b/cast  
(1 Recording 1929 June 24 Labbette, Beecham (pno.))  
(3 Recording 1929 July 10 Labbette, Beecham (pno.))
- 1,3,4 1929 December 3 Labbette, Beecham (pno.) Liverpool PS
- 3,4 1934 April 15 Labbette/LPO b/cast  
(3, 4 Recording 1938 February 11 Labbette/LPO 3 unpublished)
- 3,7 1946 November 18 Elsie Suddaby/RPO Westminster Delius Festival  
(2 Recording 1949 April 6 Marjorie Thomas/RPO)  
(3 Recording 1951 April 3 Suddaby/RPO)

## V/16 DEUX MELODIES (Verlaine)

1. Il pleure dans mon coeur 2. Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit

At the 1946 Festival, according to the programme the second song was conducted by Richard Austin.

- 1 1915 January 25 Jean Waterston/orch. Grafton Galleries, London fp?
- 2 1929 February 8 Labbette/Wireless O Kingsway Hall b/cast  
(2 Recording 1929 July 10 Labbette, Beecham (pno.))
- 1 1946 November 18 Suddaby/RPO Westminster Delius Festival

## V/21 [TWO SONGS FROM THE DANISH]

1. The Violet 2. Autumn [Whither?]

The 1946 Festival programme states that the orchestrations used on that occasion were by Beecham.

- 1 1929 February 8 Labbette/Wireless O Kingsway Hall b/cast  
(1 Recording 1929 July 10 Labbette, Beecham (pno.))
- 2 1934 April 15 Labbette/LPO b/cast  
(1, 2 Recording 1938 February 11 Labbette/LPO)
- 1,2 1946 November 18 Suddaby/RPO Westminster Delius Festival  
(1,2 Recording 1949 October 1 Suddaby/RPO)

## V/22 BLACK ROSES

At the 1946 Festival this song, orchestrated by Norman del Mar, was entrusted to Richard Austin.

## V/25 THE NIGHTINGALE HAS A LYRE OF GOLD

1946 November 21	John Kentish/RPO (orch. del Mar) Westminster Delius Festival
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## V/26 LA LUNE BLANCHE

1915 January 25	Jean Waterston/orch. Grafton Galleries, London fp?
1946 November 21	John Kentish/RPO Westminster Delius Festival

## V/28 I-BRASIL

At the 1946 Festival this song was sung by Marjorie Thomas and conducted by Richard Austin.

(Recording 1938 February 11 Labbette/LPO)

## V/30 FOUR OLD ENGLISH LYRICS

1. It was a lover and his lass 2. So white, so soft, so sweet is she 3. Spring, the sweet spring 4. To Daffodils

3	1929 December 3	Labbette, Beecham (pno.) Liverpool PS
2, 3, 4	1934 October 9	Labbette, Beecham (pno.) Liverpool PS
	(2, 4 Recording 1934 December 4	Labbette, Beecham (pno.) unpublished)
4	1946 November 21	Kentish/RPO (orch. del Mar) Westminster Delius Festival

## PARTS ONE AND TWO – ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA

### I/6 A VILLAGE ROMEO AND JULIET

g) At the all-Delius concert on July 8 1914 Agnes Nicholls, Frank Mullings and a small male choir performed excerpts, probably the closing scene.

### I/9 HASSAN

Michael Gray's *Beecham: A Centenary Discography* dates the recording of the un-accompanied wordless chorus as October 29 1934. The dates of the recording of the extensive LP suite are given as October 23 and 29 1955; the Serenade and Closing Scene issued may have been the recordings made on October 12 1956 and May 29 1956 respectively.

## II/2 APPALACHIA

For the 1952 recording Gray adds the dates October 29 and December 18.

## II/3 SEA DRIFT

Shortage of space did not permit a full listing of performances in Part One which are therefore detailed here. As a consequence of the full score being mislaid, Beecham's first three performances of *Sea Drift* were conducted from memory which may have become his custom (as at least the 1932 and 1936 performances of *A Mass of Life* were). Indeed Roy Henderson has written (in Procter-Gregg's above-mentioned book, p.68) that 'Beecham conducted all Delius's choral works from memory'. By all accounts Beecham's memory was prodigious.

1908	December 3	Frederic Austin/North Staffs & DCS/NSO Hanley
	December 4	Austin/North Staffs & DCS/NSO Manchester
1909	February 22	Austin/North Staffs & DCS/Beecham SO QH
1915	March 18	Hamilton Harris/Hallé Manchester
	May 11	Herbert Heyner/London Choral Soc/LSO QH
1916	March 10	Powell Edwards/Hallé Bradford
	March 22	Edwards/Hallé Birmingham
1927	April 11	Roy Henderson/LSO QH
1928	October 3	Dennis Noble/LSO Leeds Triennial Festival
	November 11	Noble/Manchester Beecham Opera Chorus/LSO RAH
	(Recording 1928 November 11, performers as above – unpublished)	
1929	October 12	Noble/London Select Choir/Col Gram O QH Delius Festival
1930	December 2	Noble/Liverpool Phil Soc
1934	November 8	William Parsons/London Select Choir QH RPS b/cast Delius Memorial Concert
1936	March 22	John Brownlee/London Select Choir/LPO QH
	(Recording 1936 April 3 and November 2, performers as above)	
1938	March 17	Noble/Hallé Manchester b/cast
1941	September 21	Ralph Nicholson/Schola Cantorum/Columbia SO WABC b/cast
1946	November 4	Redvers Llewellyn/BBC Choral Soc/RPO RAH Delius Festival
1949	May 2	Gordon Clinton/Luton Choral Soc/RPO RAH (Beecham's 70th birthday concert)
	June 24	Clinton/Luton Choral Soc/RPO b/cast
	(Recording 1951 January 22 & 26, Clinton/BBC Chorus/RPO unpublished)	
	(Recording 1954 April 28 & December 2 & 3 Bruce Boyce/BBC Chorus/RPO)	
1955	May 7	Boyce/Oxford Bach Choir/RPO RFH

## II/4 A MASS OF LIFE

Gray lists other possible recording dates as December 8 1952, January 20 and May 14 1953, though not all these sessions may have been necessary for the completion of recording.

## VI/II OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY

Gray lists the second 1957 recording date as October 7, not 8.

## VI/14 PARIS

Gray lists the second 1934 recording date as April 22, not 21.

## VI/16 BRIGG FAIR

1944 October 10 LPO Bristol

## VI/17 IN A SUMMER GARDEN

The fabled Beecham Edinburgh Festival performance, at the end of which in Lord Boothby's words 'the ravishing sound reduced his audience to breathless and almost stricken silence', took place on August 24 1956.

## VI/18 DANCE RHAPSODY NO 1

To the 1948 recording Gray adds the date of May 4.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank Maurice Parker of the Sir Thomas Beecham Society for his readiness to answer queries and for his invaluable assistance throughout this examination of Beecham's Delius repertoire.

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## GORDON CLINTON

### Midlands Branch Meeting: November 13th 1982

Weston Underwood, that minor mecca for lovers of Delius and later suppers, was again the venue for the Midlands Branch meeting on November 13th. This time as guests of Clive and Enid Bemrose, whose elegant hospitality we greatly enjoyed, members gathered to hear the noted baritone, now alas retired, Gordon Clinton. In easy and informal style, and with graceful diffidence, he gave some reminiscences of his early career and particularly his association with Sir Thomas Beecham in the years immediately after the war.

In those days, prospects for a young man fresh out of the Royal Air Force, married, with two small children, and jobless, were uncertain to say the least. Agencies were unhelpful, and the summer of 1946 found him taking leave from his only regular employment, the choir of St Paul's Cathedral, to sing in concert party on the south coast. An unexpected call to audition for Sir Thomas was a lucky break, luckier still in that only a *matinée* cancelled for good weather gave him the chance to attend. 'Can you sing a top F, boy?' was the call from somewhere in the darkened vault of an empty Albert Hall after his short performance piece.

The patronage of a major conductor was essential to the early career of a soloist in those days. Clinton was 'in' and assured of work for the period of about five years that such support tended to last. During this time he came to know Beecham pretty well, and like all who worked with him acquired a deep respect for his musicianship and orchestral flair, together with a wary appreciation of his autocratic style and acid wit. When named for a performance of *Sea Drift* to be broadcast, Clinton was rejected by the BBC on the grounds that he had failed an audition with them at an earlier date. 'Then pass him!' was Beecham's response. Two days later Clinton was called for a further audition. . .

His first Delius performance for Sir Thomas was in *Arabesque* [conducted by Richard Austin] in the 1946 festival. Although, as he claimed, a concert singer and not an operatic one, he was also chosen to play the part of the Dark Fiddler in *A Village Romeo and Juliet*. This we were able to hear with appreciation, though the performer declined to enthuse over either the 'strangest laugh' or the only high G of his career.

Perhaps the highlight of his work with Beecham, however, was the recording of *Sea Drift* made in 1951. This was never issued, for reasons which are obscure but may have had something to do with faulty reproduction on the last side. Musically there is no doubt it was a superb performance. Beecham's unerring sense of balance in his control of the rich orchestral textures of the work ensured a wonderfully clear solo line, and the passage where soloist and chorus overlap, singing different words, was entirely intelligible. The whole piece lasted twenty-three minutes, significantly less than other sometimes laboured renderings, yet at no time were the deep nostalgia and sense of regret in the words diminished. We were greatly privileged to hear the private tape of this work.

Unfortunately Lyndon Jenkins was not able to be present at this meeting, but fruit of his research was a radio interview Sir Thomas gave in a Boston (Massachusetts) studio in 1952, during an extended visit to the USA. Entitled 'The State of Music in Britain today', this tape defies description. Be assured, though, that it is, among other things, the hilarious mixture of arrogance, caustic comment and musical commonsense which one might expect [see also Journal 77, p.20]. An increasingly nonplussed interviewer is foil to Beecham's lofty urbanity and a spur to ever more outrageous comment. I recommend it.

E.E.R.

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### CORRECTION

As a result of a mis-reading, Mrs. Boswell-Cumming's name was regrettably misspelt in the January Journal. Apologies are offered for any annoyance this may have caused her.

# Correspondence

**From David Still, Market Harborough, Leicestershire**

Recently a friend sent me a post-card portraying the painting of Delius by Ernest Procter in 1929. I had never heard of this picture and so on a recent visit to the National Portrait Gallery I decided to try to see the portrait for myself as the post-card gives no indication of size or texture.

To my disappointment the portrait was not on display. However, upon enquiry it proved possible, on request, to be taken to see it 'back stage', so to speak. May I recommend any other member who cares to visit the Gallery to make such a request, as not only is the portrait interesting to view, but also where it is stored. I found myself being escorted through a veritable treasure house; quite fascinating and (for me) a unique experience.

**From Martin G Lemmon, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

I would be delighted to become the first member of the Delius Society in Saudi Arabia. You may be interested to know something about the musical scene in Saudi Arabia. The Saudis' strict interpretation of Islam severely limits the public performance of all types of music. However, the expatriates are allowed to hold concerts in their own compounds and villas. Riyadh now has a concert band, a woodwind section and several choirs. In addition the embassies 'import' several instrumentalists to give private performances. No performer has any difficulty attracting an audience here!

For those interested in music, the cassette is the most important outlet. The record is almost never seen, I suppose they are too difficult to store in a hot country, but the cassette is enormously popular and a huge market has grown up in pirate copying. Saudi Arabia has no copyright laws and so the pirate companies filch at will. This infuriates professional musicians and their record companies, although it is not quite so unpopular with the buyers.

On a recent trip down south to the Yemen border I visited a small, picturesque market town. Among the veiled ladies selling jewellery and the Bedus selling carpets I found a hole-in-the-wall store where perfumes and cassettes were on sale. Pushing past the Old Spice, frankincense and myrrh, I found the tape I wanted – the Delius string quartet played by the Fitzwilliam String Quartet. I woke up the shopkeeper and asked him if he had ever heard the tape. He told me that it was good disco music, and on his recommendation, of course, I bought it.

The university in Riyadh has an expanding section on western music. I am trying to persuade the librarian to buy more books on classical composers, particularly those who expressed an interest in Arab culture.



From Thomas H Gunn, Director of the Swisher Library, Jacksonville

Your readers of Professor Randel's correspondence in the January issue are, no doubt, hungering for a resolution to his 'continuing dismay' about his feeling that I and Jeff Driggers of the Jacksonville Public Library led Christopher Palmer 'down a primrose path of questionable conjecture' and that his conjecture led to some doubt about his credibility as a biographer. Your readers would be amused at the number of letters that have gone up and down the eastern seaboard and the amount of time that our reference librarians at Jacksonville University have spent over what is an incomplete citation in Professor Randel's research.

A librarian's duty when offered a citation is to produce the article. Unfortunately the citation as given in his book did not stipulate in which of the eighteen Florida newspapers his Sunday TV supplement appeared. The supplements were different for the various cities, though given the same name. His citation only led us to a page of TV listings and advertisements in our *All Florida and TV Week Magazine* as a Sunday supplement to our Jacksonville paper, *The Florida Times Union*. Our professional librarians had no reason to doubt Professor Randel's research or the authenticity of Delius's ownership of a particular piano. The point is that his citation was inadequate to lead us to the article that a library user wanted.

When I wrote to Professor Randel explaining the situation, I received his reply in which he acknowledges he has had similar problems and from which I quote: 'As for the particular version that did carry the article that I have a clipping of, I cannot, alas, tell you which area version it was. After twenty years I cannot remember how I got the clipping, but I rather think it was handed to me, or mailed to me, by some friend, or student perhaps, who knew of my interest in Delius. Footnote citations often name newspapers that are issued in different editions each day — city edition, etc. I have more than once not been able to find a news story cited in a given newspaper, because it was not printed in the edition preserved in the library where I was working . . . Perhaps we *should* indicate the edition in the footnote . . . Your diligence has produced an explanation.'

(Professor Randel has kindly forwarded a copy of the article in question which, it is hoped, will appear in a future issue of the Journal — Ed.)

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### Sunday May 1st Atlanta, Georgia

This is the unconfirmed date for a performance of *Appalachia* with Robert Shaw conducting the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. A commercial recording is planned to follow.

**Saturday May 7th at 7.45 p.m. Civic Hall, Guildford**

Vernon Handley conducts the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir in *Appalachia*. This will be Mr Handley's last concert as music director at Guildford though he will be returning as guest conductor.

**Saturday May 14th at 7.30 p.m. Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool**

Vernon Handley conducts *Sea Drift* (soloist Peter Knapp) with the RLPO and Choir.

**Sunday May 15th at 4 p.m. Washington Cathedral, Mount St Alban, Washington D.C.**

Paul Callaway conducts the Cathedral Choral Society and the National Symphony Orchestra in *A Mass of Life*, with soloists John Reardon, Gene Tucker, Beverly Benso and Laura English-Robinson. At 2.30 p.m. the day before in Hearst Hall the former music critic of the *Washington Post*. Paul Hume, will deliver a lecture entitled 'Let's learn about Delius'.

**June 8, 11, 17, 23 & 26 St Louis, Missouri**

Dr Fenby conducts the world première stage performances of *Margot La Rouge* produced by the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (see also September 8 below).

**Sunday June 12th at 3 p.m. Limpsfield, Surrey**

Visit to Delius's grave at St Peter's Church. We are indebted once again to Mr and Mrs Parfitt for extending an invitation for tea afterwards to any members making the trip. Those wishing to accept should notify Gilbert Parfitt in advance at 31 Lynwood Grove, Orpington, Kent. Limpsfield lies on the A25 between Reigate and Sevenoaks. A map showing access to the church was printed in Journal 57. A copy of this map will be supplied on application to the Editor.

**Saturday July 2nd at 2.30 p.m. Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place, London**

Delius Society AGM. The Annual Dinner will once again be held in the Bloomsbury Centre Hotel which is a short walk away. Further details are included with this issue.

**Saturday August 20th at 2 p.m. London**

Estelle Palmley will be 'At Home' to members from 2 p.m. until 7 p.m. RSVP to Membership Secretary, 22 Kingsbury Road, Colindale, London NW9 ORR.

**Thursday September 8th & Saturday September 10th King's Theatre, Edinburgh**

The Opera Theatre of St Louis production of *Fennimore and Gerda* as part of the Edinburgh International Festival. The second of the two performances occurs on the last day of the Festival. (This production was extensively reviewed in Journal 73.)

**Thursday September 22nd at 7 p.m. Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place, London**

Delius Society meeting: an evening with Eric Fenby.

Members may wish to make a note of further Society meetings planned for the autumn, on Tuesday October 18th and Wednesday November 30th, both to be held at the BMIC, 10 Stratford Place, London W1.

Further details of Delius Society events may be obtained from the Programme Secretary, Derek Cox: 01-677-8141 ext. 49 (day-time).



